



"Honoring the past to challenge the future"



Erika Pauly

Erika was born on May 6, 1977, in San Angelo, Texas, while her father was stationed at Goodfellow Air Force Base. The youngest daughter of Mike and Lynne Pauly, Erika grew up on military installations in Crete, Republic of Greece; Anchorage, Alaska; and Fort Meade, Maryland. She moved to Plattsburgh in 1992, when her father took a teaching position with Plattsburgh High School. Erika was a distinguished graduate, graduating in the top 10% of the PHS class of 1995. She entered into the United States Air Force May 31, 1995 and is now a Master Sergeant (Senior Non-Commissioned Officer.) She earned an Associate Degree in Information Systems Technology from the Community College of the Air Force and a Bachelor's Degree in Emergency Management from the American Military University. In addition, she was an honor graduate of the Air and Space Operations Center Personnel Recovery Qualification Course, and has added to her education with the Senior NCO Academy, Distance Learning and the Joint Professional Military Education Course, Distance Learning.

Service to her community is a large part of Erika's life; she is a member of American Legion Post 56 and 40 & 8 Voiture Locale 1218, both of Plattsburgh, as well as a member of Offutt AFB's professional SNCO (Senior NCO) organization, Top III. Her service to her community and country include: Team Offutt's SNCO Induction Ceremony Committee Member, Offutt AFB Air Show volunteer, Plattsburgh Harvest Festival color guard organizer/participant; American Legion Post 56 Memorial Day Flag ceremony; coordinator for uniform donation for Plattsburgh JROTC; Juvenile Diabetes Race team leader, Omaha Race for the Cure team leader (raised \$6,000); Outstanding Airmen of the Year Award Ceremony volunteer; 55 WG Quarterly Awards ceremony Master of Ceremonies; highway cleanup, Bellevue; sandbag detail volunteer; Brush-up Nebraska participant; CAOC monthly awards ceremony volunteer; AF Sergeant's Association POW/MIA Remembrance Day committee; AF Sergeant's Association Membership 5K Run committee; ACC/A3 picnic volunteer; Langley AFB Airshow volunteer; Hampton Road's Peninsula Arthritis Walk; Children's AIDS Network Haunted House decoration committee; Burbank Elementary School, Virginia cleanup; Davis-Monthan AFB 15th Annual Base Picnic Project Coordinator; Morale & Welfare activities, volunteered over 30 hours, Bagram AB Afghanistan; Airmen's Attic volunteer; Santa's in Blue volunteer; Booster Club member, over 45 volunteer hours; and Airmen Against Drunk Driving Program volunteer.

Erika's duties in the Air Force have taken her around the world:

..July 1995 – August 1998, ATO Automation Technician, 612th Combat Plans Squadron, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona
..August 1998 – August 1999, Senior Air Defense/ Search and Rescue Controller, 85th Group Keflavik Naval Air Station, Iceland.
..September 1999 – September 2001, Senior Emergency Actions Controller, 52nd Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem AB, Germany.
..September 2001 - May 2005, NCOIC Training, 355th Wing, Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.
..May 2005 - January 2008 NCOIC ACC Reports, Langley AFB, Virginia
..January 2008 - April 2010, NCOIC Command and Control Operations Training, Policy and Procedures Branch, Strategic Operations Division, Directorate of Air and Space Operations, HQ Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Virginia
..August 2010- February 2012, NCOIC Systems, 55th Wing, Offutt AFB, NE ..February 2012 – November 2012, NCOIC Command Post Operations, 55th Wing, Offutt AFB, ..November 2012- to present, Superintendent SACCS Management Flight, 625th Strategic Operations Squadron, Offutt AFB, NE

She has accumulated over two and a half years deployed to hostile environment locations supporting multiple operations including Operation Southern Watch, Operation Joint Forge, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom:

..July 1997 – December 1997, Deployed Contingency Theater Automated Planning System Operator, Operations Directorate, Joint Task Force – Southwest Asia, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
..March 2000 – June 2000, Deployed Command Post Controller, Tuzla AB, Bosnia-Herzegovina ..February 2004- June 2004, Deployed Command Post Controller, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, Bagram AB, Afghanistan
..September 2007 – January 2008, Deployed Command Post Controller, 332nd Expeditionary Logistical Readiness Squadron, AL Qayyarah, Iraq
..April 2009- April 2010, Deployed Combat Search and Rescue Controller, US Central Command Joint Personnel Recovery Center, Combat Operations, 609th Air and Space Operations Center, Al Udeid, AB, Qatar

Erika's achievements and awards in her career are many. She was selected to rewrite the Command Post Specialty Knowledge Test for the AF Weighted Airman Promotion System; AFSA (Air Force Sergeants Association) Chapter 358 NCO of the Year 2008; HQ ACC/A3 NCO of the year 2007; USAF HHQ NCO Command Post Controller of the Year 2006; HQ ACC Command Post NCO of the Year 2006; 20 AF SNCO of the Quarter, 55 Wing Staff SNCO of the Quarter; HQ/A3 NCO of the Quarter; HQ ACC/A3S NCO of the quarter; 55 Wing Omaha Trophy Team Award; ACC Command Post of the Year Team Award; NSSAV Command Post Testing Team Award; ACC/IG Command Post Testing Team Award; CFACC Outstanding Performer Award; ACC HHQ Command and Control Element of the Year Team Award; ACC Command Post of the Year Team Award; Outstanding Performer, Al Udeid, AB, Qatar; Superior Performer, Exercise VIGILAND SHIELD; 355th Wing Controller of the Month; Eagle Achiever Award, Tuzla AB, Bosnia-Herzegovina; Victory Awards (three times), Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona; Air Force Commendation Medal (four times); Army Commendation Medal; Joint Service Achievement Medal; Air Force Achievement Medal (four times); Meritorious Unit Award (twice); Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (twice); Air Force Organizational Excellence Award; Air Force Good Conduct Medal (six times); National Defense Service Medal (twice); Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (twice); Iraq Campaign Medal (twice); Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Air Force Longevity Service (four times); NATO Medal.

"I must admit that I was both surprised and humbled by my selection into the PHS Hall of Fame. I did not think that what I was doing for my country and my community wasn't anything that anyone else wouldn't have done given the opportunity. But that's really what my education from Plattsburgh High School gave me: an opportunity. It was the choices that I made based on that opportunity that led me to being here today."



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Evelyn Vinduska McKnight Au.D.

Evelyn is a 1973 graduate of PHS. She is the daughter of Sophia and the late Henry Vinduska and grew up on a farm in the Plattsmouth area. After high school, she attended the University of Nebraska in Lincoln where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1977. In 1979 she received her Masters of Audiology from the University of Iowa. And in 1980 she opened her audiology practice in Fremont, Nebraska. She now has a Doctoral Degree in Audiology from Central Michigan University.

In her audiology career she worked with or for: Professional Hearing Center, PC Fremont, NE; Dr. Britt Thedinger, MD Fremont, NE; Member of Nebraska Board of Hearing Aid Instruments; Educational Service Unit #2 Fremont, NE; Immanuel Hospital Omaha, NE; Veteran's Administration Hospital Omaha, NE, Grant Wood Area Education Agency Cedar Rapids, IA; and has given many presentations on hearing loss.

Evelyn is one of ninety-nine cancer survivors who contracted hepatitis C through substandard medical care at the Fremont, Nebraska Cancer Center in 2000-2002. Evelyn was infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV) while battling breast cancer in 2000. Nebraska Health and Human Services along with the CDC determined that she, along with ninety-eight other cancer patients, had been infected with HCV that was transmitted by reused, contaminated syringes during chemotherapy treatments. Nurses, working under the direction of her oncologist, used unsafe practices and had reused syringes to access multi-dose vials of saline used as part of her treatment regimen.

Over 600 patients were notified of their potential exposure, 450 patients were tested, 99 patients with HCV were identified and 6 deaths among these cancer patients were attributed to HCV and not their cancer. This was the largest known healthcare-associated outbreak of HCV in U.S. history.

Evelyn's personal experience motivated her to bring attention to, and advocate on behalf of, safe injection practices. She founded Hepatitis Outbreaks' National Organization for Reform (www.HONORreform.org). The organization, founded in 2006, works from the grassroots level to the legislative level to encourage safety by design, incentive, and education. She has traveled the country giving presentations to thousands on the critical necessity of injection safety. Her efforts have reached Washington, DC where a GAO investigation outlined the causes and possible solutions to the numerous disease outbreaks that have resulted from unsafe injections across the country.

Evelyn was instrumental in the development and securing of funds for the One and Only Campaign, through partnerships with the CDC Foundation, the CDC and the Safe Injection Practices Coalition. The One and Only Campaign is an educational campaign to educate providers about safe injection practices and to empower patients to partner with their healthcare providers for safe healthcare. In 2013 Evelyn was honored with awards from the Centers for Disease Control and the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases.

Evelyn has been featured on a number of national news outlets including CBS News, CNN, USA Today, *the Wall Street Journal* and *Newsday* and is a renowned patient safety advocate and speaker. Evelyn is also a co-author of an award-winning book *A Never Event: Exposing the Largest Outbreak of Hepatitis C in American Healthcare History*, which chronicles the story of the Nebraska hepatitis C outbreak. Along with a survivor of a Colorado outbreak, she writes a regular blog entitled "Survivor Stories" (www.HONORreform.org/blog) which recounts the personal stories of individuals affected by unsafe injections. She also has authored a chapter in a book about patient safety entitled *The Truth about Big Medicine: Righting the Wrongs for Better Health Care*.

Evelyn is married to Dr. Thomas McKnight also a graduate of PHS. They have three sons: Luke (married to Erin, a pediatrician) Curt (married to Holly, a periodontist with a son, Lincoln), and Alex (married to Kristen, an ultrasound technician); all are physicians. As an active family they participated in church, baseball, soccer, camping, water and snow skiing activities, and spent lots of time with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. The boys were also exposed to lessons of compassion through family service in soup kitchens and medical mission trips.

Thomas A. McKnight, M.D.

Tom is the son of Cecil and the late Lila McKnight of Plattsmouth. He is a 1971 graduate of Plattsmouth High School, where he was salutatorian of his class and participated in athletics, band and National Honor Society. After high school he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Nebraska Wesleyan University in 1975, and Medical Degree from the University of Nebraska Medical Center in 1977. He completed a family practice residency in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where he was Chief Resident.

After residency, Tom volunteered as a physician with Project USA, serving public health hospitals in Mescalero, NM, Browning, MT and Barrow, AK in 1981. He then established a family medicine private practice in Fremont, NE, where he continues to serve the community today. He is certified through the American Academy of Family Physicians and has served on numerous committees for the Fremont Area Medical Center as well as held offices for the Fremont Area Medical Center medical staff. He is medical director for numerous local industries, schools and Boy Scouts and church camps.

Tom is on the University of Nebraska Medical Center volunteer faculty and has enjoyed mentoring many medical students throughout the years, including his three sons. In 1980 he wrote "Lymphadenopathy in a Family Practice" for the publication, American Association of Family Practice. He was chosen Nebraska Family Physician of the Year in 2014.

Medical research is very important to Tom and his practice has participated in clinical trials for the National Institute of Health as well as pharmaceutical companies. Some of the clinical research studies have evaluated medications for migraine headaches, fungus infections, arthritis, high cholesterol, diabetes, herpes zoster, high blood pressure and flu.

Tom has almost made a career of volunteering where needed:

Founding member of UNMC Parent/Family Advisory Board, UNMC MD Alumni board, American Cancer Society, Dodge County Blood Mobile physician, Medicine supplier for local mission trips to Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras, Jamaica, and Guatemala; Local high school sports physician, founding member of Mt. Michael Benedictine School Booster Club, President of Mt. Michael Benedictine School Men's Club, Mt Michael Benedictine School Board member, co-founder of the non-profit CASH – Combining Agriculture, Safety & Health, steering committee member to build new St. Patrick's Catholic Church, YMCA committee for promoting youth involvement in running, Fremont Area United Family Services physician, Nebraska Beekeepers Assoc., Dodge County Crisis Center physician, co-founder of Hepatitis Outbreak's National Organization for Reform (HONORReform), a nonprofit patient advocacy foundation, honorary co-chairman of the St. Patrick's Elementary School Building Campaign.

He is a member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Fremont, Nebraska. His wife is Evelyn Vinduska McKnight who graduated from PHS in 1973 and is a licensed audiologist, and patient safety advocate. They have three sons: Luke, who received his MD from UNMC in 2008, currently is a hospitalist at Ohio State Medical Center and married to Erin, who is in an advanced fellowship in adolescent medicine. Curtis received his MD from UNMC in 2009, is a staff psychiatrist at St Joseph's Hospital in Scottsdale, AZ and is married to Holly who is a periodontist; they have a son, Lincoln. Alex received his MD from UNMC in 2013, is in ENT residency at Wake Forest, North Carolina and is married to Kristen, who is an ultrasound technician. His hobbies are his family, gardening, arborist activities, sports, jogging, roller-blading, and photography.

Tom was instrumental in uncovering the 2002 Nebraska Hepatitis C outbreak, in which 99 Nebraskans (including his wife, Evelyn) were infected with Hepatitis C when a nurse reused syringes in an oncology clinic. The McKnight's personal experience motivated them to bring attention to and advocate on behalf of safe injection practices. Their story has been featured on a number of national news outlets including CBS News, CNN, USA Today, *the Wall Street Journal* and *Newsday* and are renowned patient safety advocates and speakers. They founded Hepatitis Outbreaks' National Organization for Reform (www.HONORReform.org). The organization, founded in 2006, works from the grassroots level to the legislative level to encourage safety by equipment design, policy incentives, and patient and provider education. They have traveled the country giving presentations to thousands on the critical necessity of injection safety. Their efforts have reached Washington, DC where a Governmental Accountability Office investigation outlined the causes and possible solutions to the numerous disease outbreaks that have resulted from unsafe injections across the country. As a result of this report, several high level policies have been put in place at the federal level to foster injection safety. HONORReform is now leading a national task force to address the issue of drug diversion by healthcare providers affecting patient safety.

The McKnights were instrumental in the development and securing of funds for the One and Only Campaign, through partnerships with the CDC Foundation, the CDC and the Safe Injection Practices Coalition. The One and Only Campaign is a national educational campaign to educate providers about safe injection practices and to empower patients to partner with their healthcare providers for safe healthcare.